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PRESS RELEASE

United States Agency for International Development Extends Assistance For Environmental Law Enforcement Practice in the Philippines

MANILA (February 23, 2005) – A three-person team from the United States Department of Interior (USDOI) is in town to conduct a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) of Philippine environmental law enforcement practice. The TNA is the first activity under the three-year Partnership for Biodiversity Conservation Project.

The new Partnership for Biodiversity aims to strengthen biodiversity conservation in the Philippines by increasing capacity of communities, local, and national environmental law enforcement bodies. The Philippines is one of 17 megadiversity countries in the world but is also counted among the 25 most highly endangered biodiversity “hotspots” due to tremendous socioeconomic threats to its natural resources. The USDOI assistance will help strengthen abilities to address critical threats to the country’s environment and natural resources and to promote good governance – transparency and accountability – in enforcing environmental laws.

Through this partnership, the USDOI, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will provide technical assistance to help the Philippines address illegal logging, destructive fishing, and pollution that are currently degrading the country’s rich natural resources.

Established 150 years ago, the USDOI is the U.S. government’s largest land management and conservation agency and is responsible for the management and protection of 436 million acres of natural, cultural, and historically significant resources. The USDOI includes such agencies as the National Parks Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Geological Survey. Through its International Technical Assistance Program, the USDOI offers technical experts with a depth of applied technical knowledge and international experience. The USDOI fosters direct, sustained exchanges between U.S. natural resource managers and their host-country counterparts with a focus on building host country technical and training capacities to ensure long-term program sustainability.



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The USDOJ team will be in country for two weeks and will meet with key officials and staff from various government agencies, local government units, non-government organizations, and communities involved in the enforcement of environmental laws. Consultations will be held with officials from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources including the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, Environmental Management Bureau, Forest Management Bureau, and the National Solid Waste Management Commission; Philippine National Police; Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources; selected local government units, civil society groups, and on-going USAID natural resource management projects. The assessment will serve as a planning tool to determine how the USDOJ can best assist environmental law enforcement in the Philippines during the three-year Partnership for Biodiversity.

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